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DEDICATION

DAVID J. KEIL



The California Botanical Society is pleased to dedicate Volume 61 to one of California's best plant taxonomists, Dr. David J. Keil, in recognition of his tireless efforts toward a greater understanding of the California flora. Dave was born in 1946 with a plant key in his hand, or at least that's how I imagine it. Over his career he has come to know the California flora so well that he is considered by many to be among the best for sight identification of plants in the state. Dave's passions for botany were developed at Arizona State University where he earned his B.S. in 1968, and a M.S. in 1970. Dave went on to earn a Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1973 while studying the relationships of *Pectis* in the southwestern U.S. and México. His career is defined by rigorous taxonomic research, new species discovery, the production of floras, and excellent teaching.

Dave had numerous teaching appointments after the completion of his Ph.D., so it wasn't until he joined the faculty at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo in 1976 that the California botanical community benefited from Dave's keen eye and botanical expertise. His primary research focuses on the systematics of the Asteraceae, which has yielded many papers that have contributed to our understanding of California's largest plant family. His work has included new species descriptions, new techniques in systematics, new taxonomic treatments, and primary research in ecology. His work spans all of North America, with particular attention to California and Arizona. His generic treatments span all tribes of the Asteraceae including *Pectis* L., *Cirsium* Mill., *Isocarpha* R. Br., and *Gnaphalium* L.

Dave was appointed as the Director of The Robert F. Hoover Herbarium at Cal Poly in 1978, and there he has built an extensive collection. Dave is an avid plant collector, whether it be in his home county, elsewhere in California, or on one of his many family vacations throughout North America. Dave's family has been actively involved in his collections, from pressing in the field to mounting in the herbarium. Dave's collections now number at near 33,000, most of which are housed at the Hoover Herbarium at Cal Poly. These collections have served as the basis for his forthcoming update to the flora of San Luis Obispo County.

As a result of extensive time spent in the field and herbarium, Dave has authored over 130 species descriptions mostly in the Asteraceae, but also in the Poaceae and Ranunculaceae. Four taxa have been named in Dave's honor: *Ancistrocarphus keilii* Morefield, *Erigeron inornatus* (A. Gray) A. Gray var. *keilii* G.L. Nesom, *Wedelia keilii* B.L. Turner, and *Chrysanthellum keilii* B.L. Turner. Few can claim such an impact in California taxonomy.

Dave's extensive fieldwork made him a perfect candidate for involvement with The Jepson Manual Project. Dave authored the Key to California Plant Families and served as the editor and primary author of the Asteraceae in both editions of the manual. Key writing has always been one of Dave's strengths, and it is a major part of the long lasting legacy he has created throughout his career. For the second edition of The Jepson Manual, Dave authored a new key to families that encompasses the major taxonomic revisions that have taken place since 1993 and served as co-editor for the entire manual. His ability to track nomenclatural changes and translate those changes into meaningful morphological characters in all the major plant families was crucial for the writing of the new family key. Part of what makes Dave's keys so valuable, is that they are written with field botanists in mind. He is committed to making keys that are useful and attempts to anticipate user misinterpretation on unfamiliar characters. This can only be done if the key writer is familiar with every other possible plant, which Dave usually is. Expect to see many of Dave's additions to California's eFlora as he field-tests the current keys in Jepson. Beyond California, Dave has edited and served as a contributing author for three volumes of the Asteraceae for the Flora of North America project. He has published keys to Arizona's plant families and produced many regional floras.

In addition to these highly technical botanical references, Dave has also authored works designed to teach the uninitiated the wonders of California botany. He produced *Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo* in collaboration with the local California Native Plant Society (CNPS) chapter — a full-color reference for San Luis Obispo's open space preserves. Many students of California botany may have used one of Dave's textbooks in their courses. Dave authored *California Vegetation* with V. L. Holland in 1995 and *Vascular Plant Taxonomy* with Dirk Walters in 1971, a textbook now in its 5th edition. Both texts have trained generations of California botanists.

It is one thing for a botanist to develop expertise on their own, but Dave has been sharing his expertise, knowledge, and excitement about plants with generations





of students at Cal Poly. Over his career Dave taught courses in general botany, plant taxonomy, field botany, and biogeography. Dave won Cal Poly's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1980. Each spring, for the last 37 years, in a course call Field Botany, Dave traveled around California with a group of students teaching them elements of the California flora. Students have described Field Botany as both the hardest and best course they take during their college careers, and it is often a life changing experience. Many of California's best land managers, academics, and consultants have gotten their start in botany as a result of Dave's courses. This year, which was Dave's 37th and last year teaching Field Botany, we met past course alumni on every field trip. Students have been so inspired by the experience that a near cult following has developed with students returning year after year to tag along, or act as assistants for the course.

Songs have been written in honor of Dave and the experiences he creates during the course. For example, the desert camping trip inspired "Little Bushes" by Bob Hole, a student in 1989.

"Little bushes on the hillside,
Little bushes, and they're all gray-green
Little bushes, little bushes
And they all look just the same.

There's *Eriogonum*, and *Ephedra*
And *Purshia*, and *Lepidium*,
And they're all just little bushes,
And they all look just the same."

Or this song called "The Coastal Salt Marsh" honoring both Matt Ritter and Dave Keil.

"Rah, Rah Ritter and salute to Captain Keil,
We're marching off to learn the names of each plant in the field,
Juncus, *Carex*, *Scirpus*, *Typha* - all will be revealed,
So sing Rah, Rah Ritter and salute to Captain Keil."

Dave served the California Botanical Society as editor of Madroño for three years (1987–1990), was on the editorial board from 1987 to 1994, and is the current editor of Madroño's Noteworthy Collections section. He is an active CNPS member, and has taught numerous Jepson Workshops on Asteraceae, Rare Plants, the Flora of Kern County, and the Flora of San Luis Obispo County.

Personally, Dave has served as an incredible mentor and friend to me. I hope that over my career I can achieve a fraction of what he has done in the classroom, the herbarium, and in the field. I benefit immensely from being able to walk down the hall and be given the answers to difficult questions about Latin, curation, plant morphology, or taxonomy. Watching him work and teach is truly inspiring. Even in his final years of teaching, he is constantly seeking better and novel pedagogical approaches. He still gets excited over seeing new plants, and his passion is infectious.

Dave is retiring from Cal Poly this coming year and will focus his efforts toward a new flora for San Luis Obispo County. He will continue working at The Hoover Herbarium and collecting throughout California. It is an honor to work with him. On behalf of all students of California botany, thank you very much, Dave, for your service and inspiration.

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